

Application No. 10/556,720
Reply to Office Action of October 3, 2008

SUPPORT FOR THE AMENDMENTS

Claims 5, 6, 8 ,10 and 12 have been amended to remove multiple dependencies.

Newly-added Claims 14-23 are supported by the specification and the original claims.

Accordingly, no new matter is believed to have been added to the present application by the amendments submitted above.

REMARKS

Claims 1-23 are now pending. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The present invention relates to a polychloroprene latex composition obtained by emulsion polymerization of chloroprene alone or chloroprene and a monomer copolymerizable with chloroprene, in the presence of a polyvinyl alcohol and a nonionic emulsifier. See Claim 1.

The present invention also relates to a method for producing a polychloroprene latex composition, which comprises emulsion polymerization of chloroprene alone, or chloroprene and a monomer copolymerizable with chloroprene, in the presence of a polyvinyl alcohol and a nonionic emulsifier. See Claim 13.

The rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Yashima et al. is respectfully traversed. The cited reference fails to disclose the claimed composition or the method of making the composition.

An important feature of the present invention is polymerizing chloroprene *in the presence of* polyvinyl alcohol and a nonionic emulsifier. The presence of polyvinyl alcohol and nonionic emulsifier in the polymerization system has the effect of lowering the viscosity of the resulting polychloroprene latex and raising the solid content.

In Yashima et al., a nonionic emulsifier is added to a polychloroprene latex after polymerization to improve water resistance.

In paragraph [0033] of Yashima et al., the reference discloses that “The adhesive composition of the present invention may optionally contain, if necessary, an inorganic filler such as..., a plasticizer or softener such as..., a thicknesener such as..., a surfactant such as polyoxyakylene alkyl ether,..., various anti-aging agents, ultraviolet absorbes and antioxidants.” Polyoxyalkylene ethers are recited as surfactants in Yashima et al., while a polyoxyalkylene ether is used as a nonionic emulsifier in the present invention.

However, it is clear from the nature of the other additives recited in the above passage that in Yashima et al., these additives are added to a polychloroprene latex *after* polymerization-- i.e., *after preparation of the polychloroprene latex*, not at the time of polymerization of chloroprene.

The additives, such as an inorganic filler, a plasticizer and a thickener, are added to adjust properties of a polychloroprene latex obtained by polymerizing chloroprene. Thus, in Yashima et al., these additives are added after polymerization of chloroprene.

The process described in the reference is completely different from the claimed invention. In the present invention, a nonionic emulsifier and polyvinyl alcohol are present in the polymerization system *at the time of polymerizing of chloroprene*. In contrast, in Yashima et al., a surfactant is added to a polychloroprene latex *after polymerization of chloroprene*. Thus, Yashima et al. do not disclose or suggest the presence of nonionic emulsifier in the polymerization system at all, much less the effect of the presence of a nonionic emulsifier in the polymerization system. Accordingly, the reference fails to disclose lowering the viscosity of the resulting polychloroprene latex and raising the solid content.

In view of the foregoing, Yashima et al. fail to disclose the claimed composition or method of making the same. Accordingly, Claims 1-23 are not anticipated by that reference. Withdrawal of this ground of rejection is respectfully requested.

The objection to the claims is believed to be obviated by the amendments to the claims submitted above. Accordingly, withdrawal of these objections is respectfully requested.

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Applicants submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. Early notice to this effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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